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NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Rajul Ruhbayan, also known as "Creme" and "Day-Ja", age 29, of Suffolk, Virginia, was sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk yesterday on charges of conspiracy, perjury, suborning perjury, and witness tampering arising from his trial in federal court in August-September 2000 on drug distribution and five felony firearms charges. At the conclusion of that trial, the jury found Ruhbayan not guilty of the felony charges but guilty of two misdemeanor lesser offenses, conspiracy to possess crack cocaine and possession of crack cocaine.

Ruhbayan was found guilty October 27, 2003, by a jury following a week long trial on charges that he conspired with Yolanda Goodman and others to present false testimony in the earlier trial.

In February, 2001, Yolanda Goodman was indicted by a federal grand jury and in May, 2001, she pled guilty to obstruction of justice for her part in presenting false testimony at Ruhbayan's 2000 trial in federal court. She was sentenced to 46 months in federal prison.

The original federal charges arose when Ruhbayan was arrested by Martinsville, Virginia, police after he and several others fled from a fatal shooting in an apartment complex. The shooter, who escaped, was a passenger in Ruhbayan's van. Ruhbayan was arrested, found to possess crack cocaine and a large amount of money, charged, and released on bond. The Martinsville police obtained assistance from the Suffolk police in conducting surveillance of Ruhbayan's residence in Suffolk. On April 14, 2000, Suffolk police arrested Ruhbayan and recovered a loaded 9mm pistol from his van. As a convicted felon, Ruhbayan could not possess a firearm or ammunition. The case was referred for federal prosecution under Project EXILE. The remainder of the charges were developed by further investigation by BATF agents and task force agents, Suffolk police, and Martinsville police.

The evidence in the 2003 trial included numerous letters Ruhbayan had written Yolanda Goodman in 2000, urging her to get someone to claim the gun found in his van and to work with several others to get their stories straight that Ruhbayan never possessed guns and never distributed drugs. The 2003 jury got to hear the real story of what happened in 2000.

Mr. McNulty stated: "Justice is about getting at the truth. We demand truthful testimony by all who take part in judicial proceedings. This case demonstrates the serious consequences that result

from lying under oath and tampering with witnesses."

Project EXILE is a multi-agency joint federal and state task force targeting armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide effort by the Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project EXILE has produced 711 convictions and removed 1338 firearms from armed criminals.

The latest charges against Ruhbayan were investigated by BATF agents and task force agents and prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe.

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